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UNCLAS YEREVAN 002793

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: NEW DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER THE FIRST IN A SERIES

1. (U) Sensitive But Unclassified. Please treat accordingly.

SUMMARY

2. (SBU) Armenian President Robert Kocharian named Armen Bayburdian Deputy Foreign Minister (DFM) December 24. Bayburdian joins current Deputy Foreign Ministers Tatul Margarian (expected to be named Ambassador to the U.S. after Arman Kirakossian returns to Yerevan) and Ruben Shugarian (scheduled to be Armenia's next ambassador to Italy). We expect that the president will name Arman Kirakossian and Gegham Gharibjanian to the two DFM positions that will come open early in 2005. End Summary.

ARMEN BAYBURDIAN

3. (SBU) New Deputy Foreign Minister Armen Bayburdian previously served as a GOAM DFM from 1997 to 2000, and as Armenia's Ambassador to India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Nepal from 2000 to 2004. Born in 1964 in Yerevan, Bayburdian is an expert on Armenian-European relations. Bayburdian joined the Armenian Foreign Service in 1993 and, in addition to his previously listed positions, has served as the Deputy UN Permanent Representative in New York from 1993 to 1995, as the Consul General in Los Angeles from 1996 to 1997. Bayburdian is married with three children.

ARMAN KIRAKOSSIAN

4. (SBU) Arman Kirakossian, 48, has been Ambassador to the U.S. since 1999. Before taking up his current position in Washington, he was Ambassador to Greece; in the early 90s he served as Armenia's First Deputy Foreign Minister. A historian by training, Kirakossian and his wife have one son.

GEGHAM GHARIBJANIAN

5. (SBU) Gegham Gharibjanian served as Armenian Ambassador to Iran and Qatar for six years, following a stint in the National Assembly in the mid-90s. He returned to Yerevan in mid-December 2004 and is expected to be named Deputy Foreign Minister in early 2005. Born in 1951, Gharibjanian has extensive experience in the Middle East, and worked as a translator in Iran from 1978 to 1981. A fellow student and long-time friend of Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian, Gharibjanian's wife, Aida, performed with the Armenian State Dance Ensemble; their two daughters and son are students in Yerevan.
EVANS